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Department of State **TELEGRAM**

CONFIDENTIAL 865

PAGE 01 SAIGON 11518 01 OF 02 171247Z

42
ACTION EA-15

INFO OCT-01 UPW-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07
NSAE-00 NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 IO-13
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FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3504
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
USDEL FRANCE
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMCONSUL DANANG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAIGON 11518

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

REF: SAIGON 11247 ✓ POC 14 VIET S.

SUBJECT: UPPER HOUSE ELECTION

1. SUMMARY. AMONG THE LEADING CONTENDERS FOR THE SENATE, THE SLATES OF HUYNH VAN CAO, VU VAN MAU, AND TRUONG VINH LE SHOW SOME EFFORT TO APPEAL TO SEVERAL SPECIFIC GROUPS. NGUYEN VAN HUYEN'S LIST BASES ITS APPEAL PRINCIPALLY ON THE PERSONAL PRESTIGE AMONG SOUTHERNERS OF HUYEN AND TRAN VAN HUONG. A NUMBER OF LISTS BASE THEIR STRENGTH ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY ON A SINGLE GROUP AND IN DOING SO SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZE THEIR CHANCES. AMONG THESE ARE THE SLATES OF NGUYEN GIA HIEN, NGUYEN NGOC HUY, AND NGUYEN VAN CANH. END SUMMARY.

2. SEVERAL LISTS AMONG THE 18 WHICH HAVE FILED TO COMPETE FOR THE 30 UPPER HOUSE SEATS TO BE ELECTED AUGUST MERIT CONSIDERATION AS SERIOUS CONTENDERS. THESE INCLUDE SEVERAL LISTS WITH ATTITUDES OR PERSUASIONS GENERALLY REGARDED AS ACCEPTABLE TO PRESIDENT THIEU, AND A FEW REPRESENTING

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY Joan Szuberg DATE 1/22/82
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SAIGON 11518
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Department of State TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAIGON 11518 01 OF 02 171247Z

CLEARLY OPPOSITIONIST TENDENCIES.

3. ALTHOUGH OUR ASSESSMENT IS STILL VERY TENTATIVE, WE WOULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING SLATES AMONG THOSE WITH THE BEST CHANCES:

A. HUYNH VAN CAO, FORMER GENERAL, INCUMBENT SENATOR: LIST INCLUDES FIVE INCUMBENT PRO-GVN CATHOLIC SENATORS AND CAO DAI, HOA HAO, CAMBODIAN, AND MONTAGNARD FIGURES. SHOULD APPEAL TO MILITARY AND HARDLINERS IN ADDITION TO ETHNIC AND RELIGIOUS ELEMENTS REPRESENTED. HAS TRAN QUOC BUU (CVT LEADER) SUPPORT. WIDELY BELIEVED TO HAVE PRESIDENT THIEU'S SYMPATHY; WOULD BE IN THE RUNNING WITHOUT IT.

B. NGUYEN VAN HUYEN, INCUMBENT UPPER HOUSE CHAIRMAN: HEAVILY SOUTHERN LIST WHICH INCLUDES THREE OTHER INCUMBENT SENATORS, SOME UNKNOWNS, AND FORMER PRIME MINISTER TRAN VAN HUONG, NOTABLE EXCEPTION IN RELATIVELY COLORLESS GROUPING. PERSONAL PRESTIGE OF HUYEN AND HUONG IS LIST'S STRONG POINT. HUYEN SHOULD APPEAL TO SOUTHERN CATHOLIC VOTERS AND HUONG SHOULD STRENGTHEN HIS POSITION AMONG SOUTHERN NON CATHOLICS. QUESTIONABLE REPUTATION OF LA THANH NGHE, WEALTHY PHARMACIST WHOSE OWN 1967 UPPER HOUSE LIST WAS NEARLY DISQUALIFIED, COULD CAUSE HUYEN MORE PROBLEMS THAN NGHE'S PROBABLE CONSIDERABLE FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE IS WORTH.

C. VU VAN MAU, ATTORNEY, PROFESSOR: LIST INCLUDES OTHER RELATIVELY MODERATE AN QUANG LAY ELEMENTS SUCH AS DR. NGUYEN DUY TAI: TRAN QUANG THUAN (FORMER SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTER): AND BUI TUONG HUAN (FORMER MINISTER OF EDUCATION). LIST GOES BEYOND AN QUANG TO INCLUDE INCUMBENT SENATOR TON THAT DINH WHO HAS BEEN CLOSE TO TRAN VAN DON AND WHOSE NEWSPAPER CONG LUAN HAS BEEN TAKING STRONG OPPOSITIONIST LINE. TRAN DUY DON, A PHAN BA CAM HOA HAO ASSOCIATE, COULD ADD A MODICUM OF HOA HAO SUPPORT.

D. TRUONG VINH LE, OLD CAN LAO FIGURE, NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PRESIDENT UNDER NGO DINH DIEM: LIST INCLUDES VU HONG KHANH VNQDD DEPUTY CHAIRMAN PHAM THAI, FORMER DEPUTY INFORMATION MINISTER LE TRONG QUAT, WEALTHY LADY PHARMACIST AND CO-FOUNDER OF NEO-CAN LAO REPUBLICAN MASSES PARTY NGUYEN THI HAI AND A MONTAGNARD FIGURE. REPRESENTS MODERATE FACTION OF SPLIT NHAN XA AND MAY HAVE THIEU'S

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SYMPATHY.

4. SEVERAL OTHER LISTS OF VARYING POSITIONS VIS-A-VIS THE GVN REPRESENT INDIVIDUALS OR GROUPS WHO HAVE A CERTAIN AMOUNT OF ORGANIZATION OR APPEAL AND SHOULD MAKE A RESPECTABLE SHOWING. IN THIS CATEGORY AND MORE OR LESS ACCEPTABLE TO THE GVN ARE:

A. NGUYEN GIA HIEN, INCUMBENT SENATOR, GREATER SOLIDARITY FORCE LEADER; LIST IS ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY GSF, GROUPING A FEW INCUMBENT SENATORS, A MILITARY OFFICER, AND RESPECTED FORMER PUBLISHER PHAM VIET TUYEN. HIEN IS BANKING HEAVILY ON DISCIPLINE OF NORTHERN CATHOLIC VOTE AND COULD CONCEIVABLY GET SOME GVN SUPPORT. ONLY ATTEMPT TO BROADEN APPEAL OF LIST BEYOND GSF WAS BY INCLUDING AN ABLE AND RESPECTED MONTAGNARD.

B. NGUYEN NGOC HUY, PROGRESSIVE NATIONALIST MOVEMENT LEADER AND MEMBER OF GVN PARIS TALKS DELEGATION; LIST LOOKS EXCLUSIVELY PNM, DRAWING HEAVILY ON TAN DAI VIETS; INCLUDES TWO PNM LOWER HOUSE DEPUTIES. SHOULD GET SOME INTELLECTUAL AND CIVIL SERVANT SUPPORT AND IS NOT LIKELY TO BE HINDERED BY GVN.

C. TRUONG CONG CUU, NHAN XA CHAIRMAN REPRESENTING HARDER-LINE DIEMIST FACTION OF THE NEO-CAN LAO PARTY; LIST IS DIVERSIFIED THOUGH NOT EXCITING, BUT HAS AN OUTSIDE CHANCE IF CATHOLIC CLERGY IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHERN REGIONS SUPPORT IT.

D. NGUYEN VAN CANH, A RURAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY OFFICIAL, HEADING AN ALMOST PURELY REVOLUTIONARY DAI VIET LIST WHICH INCLUDES TWO RDV INCUMBENT SENATORS; SHOULD GET SOME SUPPORT IN CENTER.

E. NGUYE. CAO HACH, RESPECTED PROFESSOR; LIST INCLUDES UNIFIED VNQDD FIGURE PHAN NGO, SENATOR NGUYEN VAN NGAI'S BROTHER REPRESENTING NGAI'S FLEDGLING VIET-NAM DEMOCRATIC FORCE, AND OUTSPOKEN YOUNG SENATORS PHAM NAM SACH AND TRAN NGOC NHUAN.

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Department of State **TELEGRAM**

CONFIDENTIAL 873

PAGE 01 SAIGON 11518 02 OF 02 171254Z

42
ACTION EA-15

INFO OCT-01 UPW-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-02 INR-07

NSAE-00 NSC-10 P-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-20 USIA-12 IO-13

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3505
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
CINCPAC
USDEL FRANCE
AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE
AMCONSUL DANANG

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAIGON 11518

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

5. OPPOSITION LISTS IN THE "RESPECTABLE SHOWING" CATEGORY ARE:

A. MRS. NGUYEN PHUOC DAI, 1ST VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE UPPER HOUSE, HEADING RELATIVELY DIVERSIFIED LIST WHICH MIGHT GET SOME AN QUANG SUPPORT. LIST INCLUDES CAMBODIAN MONK DANH BAO WHO COULD CONTRIBUTE SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF VOTES IN DELTA AND PROFESSOR NGUYEN LUONG HUNG, AN ASSOCIATE OF TRAN NGOC LIENG IN THE SOFT-LINING NATIONAL PROGRESSIVE FORCE. AS ONLY WOMAN LIST-LEADER, MRS. DAI MIGHT ALSO ATTRACT SOME WOMEN'S VOTES.

B. PHAN BA CAM, HOA HAO FIGURE; CAM RECENTLY SUFFERED A STROKE AND HIS HEAVILY NORTHERN LIST GROUPS FIGURES MOSTLY UNKNOWN TO US. HOWEVER, CAM RAN WELL IN 1967 AND WILL GARNER SOME DELTA VOTES.

C. NGUYEN DAI BANG, AN QUANG LOWER HOUSE DEPUTY; HEAVILY CENTRAL AND NORTHERN ORIENTED LIST SHOULD GET SOME AN QUANG SUPPORT IN THE CENTER.

CONFIDENTIAL

DECLASSIFIED

Department of State TELEGRAM

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 SAIGON 11518 02 OF 02 171254Z

6. TWO OTHER LISTS WILL BEAR CLOSER EXAMINATION. FORMER CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY DEPUTY NGUYEN HUU TO IS HEADING A GROUPING THAT INCLUDES NINE OBSCURE MILITARY OFFICERS. A BUDDHIST MONK NAMED THICH THIEN PHAP WHOM WE CANNOT YET IDENTIFY IS HEADING ANOTHER LIST OF INDIVIDUALS TOTALLY UNKNOWN TO US.

7. MOST OF THE LISTS THAT SEEM STRONGEST HAVE MADE SOME ATTEMPTS TO PUT TOGETHER COALITIONS WHICH WOULD APPEAL TO DIFFERENT SPECIFIC GROUPS. THE LISTS OF CAO, MAU, AND LE FALL IN THIS CATEGORY. HUYEN'S LIST IS BASED ON A DIFFERENT TACTIC AND WILL RELY FOR ITS STRENGTH ON THE TWO MOST PRESTIGIOUS SOUTHERNERS IN THE RACE. A NUMBER OF LISTS HAVE ESCHEWED THE IDEA OF INTER-GROUP ALLIANCES AND IN DOING SO HAVE SERIOUSLY JEOPARDIZED THEIR CHANCES. THIS IS TRUE OF THE HIEN, HUY, AND CANH LISTS.

8. A FEW GENERALIZATIONS ABOUT THE 180 CANDIDATES: EDUCATORS CONSTITUTE THE LARGEST PORTION. CIVIL SERVANTS AND MILITARY PERSONNEL ARE LIBERALLY REPRESENTED. SEVERAL LOWER HOUSE DEPUTIES ARE RUNNING AND ALL BUT SEVEN OF THREE-YEAR TERM INCUMBENT SENATORS ARE SEEKING RE-ELECTION. (MOST PROMINENT THREE-YEAR SENATORS NOT RUNNING ARE TRAN VAN DON, FORMER FOREIGN MINISTER TRAN CHANH THANH, AND INTERIOR COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN BUI VAN GIAI.) MONTAGNARDS ARE RUNNING ON SIX SLATES, AND THREE SLATES OFFER CAMBODIANS. HOA HAO AND CAO DAI FACTIONS ARE REPRESENTED ON SEVERAL LISTS. SIX WOMEN ARE RUNNING. REGIONALLY, VIET-NAM PRESS BREAKS DOWN CANDIDATES AS FOLLOWS: 73 FROM NVN, 68 FROM SVN, AND 39 FROM THE CENTER (ETHNIC OR MINORITY CANDIDATES ARE NOT ASSOCIATED WITH A REGION).

9. COMPLETE LISTS BEING POUCHED TO EA/VN AND INR/REA.
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